

Listing of Claims

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings and versions of claims in this application. What is claimed is:

1. (Withdrawn) An egg carton comprising:
 - a base having a plurality of egg cells;
 - a locking flap attached to the base by at least one hinge member, the locking flap having a plurality of buttons and an inner closure mechanism;
 - a lid having a front portion opposite the locking flap and attached to the base by at least one hinge member, the lid having a plurality of closing apertures adapted to receive the plurality of buttons, and further having an outer closure mechanism adapted to interlock with the inner closure mechanism of the locking flap.
2. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein at least three hinge members attach the locking flap to the base.
3. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein at least three hinge members attach the lid to the base.
4. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the carton is composed of a thermoplastic material.
5. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the egg cells are equipped with projections adapted to allow air to circulate around substantially all of the egg.
6. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the inner closure mechanism comprises an inwardly recessed pocket and the outer closure mechanism comprises an inwardly extending member adapted to be received by the inwardly recessed pocket.
7. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 6, wherein the inner closure mechanism further contains an outwardly extending member located above the inwardly recessed pocket.

8. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 7, wherein the outwardly extending member of the inner closure element and the inwardly extending member of the outer closure element have reciprocally projecting feet.

9. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the inner closure mechanism comprises a locking aperture extending through the locking flap and the outer closure mechanism comprises an inwardly extending locking button adapted to be received by the locking aperture.

10. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 9, wherein the inwardly extending locking button contains an upwardly projecting foot to assist in securing the container in its closed position.

11. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the base further contains at least one nub which helps align the locking flap when closing the carton.

12. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 11, wherein the at least one nub applies an outward tension to the locking flap when the carton is closed.

13. (Withdrawn) The egg carton of claim 1, wherein the at least one hinge member applies outward tension to the locking flap when the carton is closed.

14. (Original) A two-way locking mechanism for a container comprising:
a locking flap having a plurality of buttons and an inner closure mechanism containing an inwardly recessed pocket;
a lid having a plurality of closing apertures adapted to receive the plurality of buttons, and further having an outer closure mechanism adapted to be received by the inner closure mechanism;
wherein the plurality of buttons extend in a first direction and the outer closure mechanism extends in a second direction opposite the buttons, when the locking mechanism is in a locked position.

15. (Currently Amended) The two-way locking mechanism ~~container~~ of claim 14, wherein the inner closure mechanism further contains an outwardly extending member is located above the inwardly recessed pocket.

16. (Currently Amended) The two-way locking mechanism ~~container~~ of claim 15, wherein the outwardly extending member of the locking flap and the inwardly extending member of the lid have reciprocally projecting feet.

17. (Currently Amended) The two-way locking mechanism ~~container~~ of claim 14 wherein the plurality of buttons are provided with feet to assist in securing the container in its closed position.

18. (Currently Amended) The two-way locking mechanism ~~container~~ of claim 15 further comprising at least one nub, wherein the at least one nub applies an outward tension to the locking flap when the container is closed.

19. (Withdrawn) An egg carton hinge comprising:

a plurality of hinge members, wherein a first hinge member is substantially centered along a longitudinal dimension of the egg carton, a second hinge member offset from the first hinge member along the longitudinal dimension, a third hinge member offset from the first hinge member along the longitudinal dimension and opposite the second hinge member;

wherein each of the plurality of hinge members comprises: (a) a first end wall attached to a first container portion, wherein the first container portion is a lid having an upper lip; (b) a second end wall attached to a second container portion, wherein the second container portion is a base having a lower lip and a plurality of egg cells; and (c) a thinned area located within the hinge member between the first end wall and the second end wall, said thinned area being adapted to ensure that the upper lip of the first container portion contacts the lower lip of the second container portion.

20. (Withdrawn) The hinge of claim 19 wherein the shape of the plurality of hinge members along the longitudinal axis is substantially elliptical.

21. (Withdrawn) The hinge of claim 19 wherein the thinned area is substantially rectangular in shape.
22. (Withdrawn) The hinge of claim 19 wherein the thinned area is elliptically shaped.
23. (Withdrawn) The hinge of claim 19 wherein the hinge applies an opening force on the first container portion.
24. (Withdrawn) A venting system for an egg carton comprising:
a base containing a plurality of egg cells, a plurality of posts, and a plurality of venting areas located at a rear of the base;
a locking flap attached to the base by at least one hinge member, the locking flap having a plurality of buttons; a lid having a front portion positioned opposite the locking flap and attached to the base by at least one hinge member, the lid having a plurality of closing apertures adapted to receive the plurality of buttons, wherein the plurality of closing apertures are larger in size than the plurality of buttons so as to create a plurality of venting apertures;
wherein the venting areas are lower than the venting apertures.
25. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 24 further comprising at least one venting hole located at the front of the base.
26. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 25 wherein two venting holes are located at the front of the base.
27. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 26 wherein the two venting holes are substantially circular in shape.
28. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 26 wherein the two venting holes are substantially triangular in shape.

29. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 24 further comprising a plurality of venting areas located at the front of the base wherein the cooler air is capable of entering the front venting areas as well as the rear venting areas.
30. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 24 wherein the egg cells are equipped with projections adapted to allow air to circulate around substantially all of the egg.
31. (Withdrawn) The venting system of claim 24 wherein a slit located between the locking flap and the base creates a venting space when the locking flap is raised into a substantially upright position.
32. (Withdrawn) A method for securing a container comprising the steps of:
positioning a lock flap in a substantially upright position;
moving a lid toward the upright lock flap;
inserting a plurality of buttons into a plurality of closing apertures adapted to receive the plurality of buttons; and
closing the container by interlocking an outer closure mechanism and an inner closure mechanism, wherein the plurality of buttons extend in a first direction and the outer closure mechanism extends in a second direction approximately opposite the buttons.
33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32 wherein the positioning of the lock flap is assisted by nubs located on a base of the container.
34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of providing an outward tension on the lock flap of the closed container.
35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein the outward tensioning is performed by at least one nub interacting with at least one projection attached to the lock flap.
36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein the tensioning is performed by at least one hinge member.